1:Srinivas E-5 (1940-42)1952 AW5 Coorg AW5

he had put away at the beginning of the rainy season. The break in the continuity of the relationship between a man and, say, his gun, creates some 'awkwardness' and so the weapons are worshipped before being used. Later, a collective hunt is held.

The Kaṇiya astrologer decides what periods of time are auspicious for worshipping the weapons and for cutting branches of the *poyyakaṇé* tree. He also decides when the village or *nāḍ* should have the collective hunt, in which direction the hunting party should go if they want the hunt to be successful, and, finally, the man who should lead the hunt.

The branches of the *poyyakaṇé* tree are used for making barriers which are erected in the rice-fields a few weeks after the end of transplantation, in order to catch the small fish which abound in the waterlogged fields during this part of the year. These fish are regarded as a great delicacy, and catching them is a favourite sport. An improvident man is described in a proverb as one who lives on fish caught in the fields and on rice borrowed from neighbours at a ruinous rate of interest.

The weapons are cleaned and kept either in the sacred central hall or in the south-western room. They are marked with sandalwood paste. (Some Coorgs, like Brahmins on the western coast, mark their foreheads with sandalwood paste before worshipping a deity.) The weapons are worshipped with flowers, and a favourite flower used for worship on this occasion is the *tōku* which derives its name from the fact that it looks like a gun. Curried meat and cooked rice-flour are offered on plantain leaves to the weapons.

After dinner, the men put on their gowns, and assemble in the south-western room, or central hall. The head of the *okka* hands over to each his weapons and the latter salutes the former after receiving his weapons.[1] The headman says, as he stands over the weapons, 'Fight a tiger and boar by stepping aside the charging beast [i.e. avoid standing in the direct line of the charge], do not underrate your enemy, fight him face to face, stand by your friend, be obedient to the king, and do not forget God.'

The headman of the *okka* feeds the domestic dogs with cooked rice-flour. Then, just before the men of the *okka* leave the house for the village green he says, 'Let the horned deer and tusked boar cross my path.' Finally, he fires a shot in the direction of the jungle.

[1] A boy who is old enough to hunt receives his first gun on this occasion.

3:Iyer E-5 (no date) 1948 AWS Coorg AWS

Hunting and Fishing

The Coorgs have been skilful hunters, and still keep up their hunting habits. Their chief weapons were the gun and the big knife in addition to the small handy waist knife. They no longer use the bow and arrow, or the sling. The long matchlock gun has gone out of use, and the wealthier Coorgs are now equipped with English guns and rifles of the best kind. The big broad-bladed curved Coorg knife, *odikathi*, is a most formidable weapon in a hand-to-hand fight. The bulk of them hunt partly for sport, and partly to supplement their vegetable diet. Pigs are coursed with dogs, brought to bay, and killed with spears, which are short, heavy, and broad in the blade, or with ordinary fighting spears. Old boars fight fiercely, and hunters are sometimes wounded or killed. Most animals are trapped. When they go hunting in a party, they have dogs which are set on tracking. When they bark, and the hunters approach, the animal is disturbed. It tries to run away or charges them. In the latter case they aim at the animal with guns and kill it.

In their spare moments the Coorgs fish in streams, rivers and tanks. They use nets. The ordinary one is the *thadusala* which is spread across the stream to prevent fish from escaping. At a distance of about a furlong, they spread another net so as to drive the fish within the net. When the nets are brought closer, many fish are caught by hand. They use also another net known as *beesvala* by which they catch fish by shooting and throwing baits.

Dietary

The Coorgs have an abundant variety of food materials. They eat pigs and goats. Their chief article of food is rice, and on festive occasions cakes and sweetmeats are prepared. Earthenware vessels are used. Their kitchens are remarkable for the cleanliness of their cooking vessels in use which are in charge of the cook. Like their Hindu sisters, the Coorg women attend on elderly members before they take meals. Before serving the meals, a little of the cooked food is offered to the family deity at the Kanni-kombare. They take an early breakfast of rice seasoned with curds and pickles. A substantial meal is taken at noon with rice and curry. At 3 p.m. kanji is again taken, and in the evening a hearty meal of boiled rice with vegetable and meat curry and other condiments. Toddy tapped from the bastard sago palm, arrack and a kind of beer made of fermented rice, brandy are the usual beverages. Of late European liquors have become common beverages at festivities.

Coorg Hospitality

The Coorg women deserve much for their industry. They rise very early, clean the kitchen, and do all kinds of work. They bear the

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

*136 Of the third order of birds, the *Rasores* or *Scrapers*, Coorg can make a goodly show with a variety of Pigeons, of which the blue pigeon—*Kg.* tórapakki—is the most common, but the green and the yellow pigeon and the ring-dove are not scarce in the forests. The Peacock (Pavo cristatus; *Kg.* meilu) with its shrill morning call, and the timid jungle fowl (Gallus Sonneratii; *Kg.* kádgóli) with its self-betraying "cockadoodle doo" are numerous in bamboo jungles, especially during the last few years of bamboo seeding. Both species together with the Woodcock and the common Partridge (Perdix cinerea; *Kg.* ganjalakki) and the Quail (Coturnix) are at the time of the ragi crop frequently brought to Mercara for sale by a class of jungle people who are most expert in catching these birds, the voices of which they very cleverly imitate. In the neighbourhood of Subramanya peacocks may not be killed, as they are believed to be the vehicles of the god residing there. The neck-feathers of the jungle cock are much valued for their beauty, each being marked by roundish hornlike plates of various shades of yellow. The Coorgs keep these as trophies, as the Indian does his hairy scalp. The single feathers are turned into artificial flies, to fishes the most attractive bait, and consequently highly prized and dearly paid for by the devotee of "the gentle art." The Crow-pheasant or common Coucal (Centropus rufipennis), distinguished by its cinnamon brown wings, long tail and crow-like head, is very frequently seen on bamboo land, where it hides itself in the dense clumps, uttering as it slowly flies away a deep note like a monkey. It feeds on insects and small reptiles and is eaten by the natives.

[239] [226] [242]

A few representatives of the fourth order of birds, the *Grallatores* or *Waders* are: the Egret (Egretta flavirostris; *Kg.* balya-póle = great crane) which towards the end of the monsoon is frequently seen stalking along paddy-fields or streams in search of prey. It is white as snow, about 3 feet high with

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

*136 (*Kg.* karingere) which catches mice and small reptiles. It frequently lives upon the thatched roofs of native houses and its flesh is eaten by the lower classes. Remarkable for its beauty and graceful evolutions is the green Whip-snake (*Kg.* pache-pámbu), which is commonly seen in shrubs. In native opinion it enjoys the imaginary purity and sanctity of the Brahmin and its skin is said to get blistered by the very shadow of man, falling upon it! An extraordinary forest-snake is the Kánam-pámbu, which is said to have a crest upon its head like a cock. The one foot long Ira-tale or two-headed snake is considered as capable of progressing equally well forwards or backwards, being gifted with a head at either end of its body. The flying snake or Páram-pámbu is very thin, of a brownish black colour and 18 inches long. Equally thin, but shorter is the Elat-áni-murgu or writing-stile-snake, which is black with white spots. Other harmless snakes are: the Billulli, the Niru-kuduma, the Túra-pámbu or cane-snake, etc.

The *Batrachians*, or the family of *Frogs*, fill the air with their croaking concert before the monsoon and during the occasional breaks, prognosticating impending rain. There is the large bull-frog, which makes itself heard at night, the common brown frog, which chiefly infests paddy-fields and tanks, and a small green frog, that lives on shrubs and trees; but all of them are feeders on insects, which they catch very cleverly. Toads, very ugly and very large, are found wherever there is a convenient hiding place on damp ground.

The river Kávéri and its affluents and the small native tanks and even the paddy-field rills are well stocked with a great variety of *Fishes*, which are caught by every class of natives, who have leisure for and take pleasure in the sport. [126] Shooting, angling, netting, basketing and poisoning with [127] Cocculus Indicus are the usual methods of fishing. For the following remarks I am chiefly indebted to Dr. Nash's list of